



BORDER LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE Policy Statement 2006-01

Immigration Reform

- The Border Legislative Conference (BLC) encourages the U.S. and Mexico federal governments, in cooperation with state and local governments, to pursue a comprehensive approach to border security and illegal immigration that promotes the following:
 1. The establishment of binational mechanisms that promote the legal, secure, orderly, and humane treatment of undocumented immigrants;
 2. Policies and reforms that establish the necessary conditions in Mexico and the U.S. to mitigate the impacts of illegal immigration in the border region and promote economic integration for the North American Hemisphere; and
 3. Deepened, strategic collaboration among law enforcement entities at all levels of government in Mexico and the U.S. to protect immigrants and border residents from abuse by organized crime and human smugglers.
- BLC supports fair and comprehensive immigration legislation that balances border security concerns with recognition of the U.S. demand for workers. This reform should include a guest worker program and a path to legalization.
 1. A comprehensive, bipartisan immigration approach is not only endorsed by immigrant advocates, but also by other important stakeholders such as the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the Service Employees International Union, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, and the Western Growers Association.
 2. The BLC supports immigration policy that includes the following:
 - A. A temporary worker program that allows employers to sponsor low-skilled immigrant workers to obtain a permanent residence status. Undocumented students under 21 would satisfy the employment requirements by attending an institution of higher education or a secondary school full-time;
 - B. A larger number of employment and family based green cards to promote family unification and reduce backlogs in application processing;

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- C. Development and implementation of plans regarding information-sharing, international and federal-state-local coordination, technology, and anti-smuggling;
 - D. Development of multilateral agreements to establish a North American security plan to improve border security;
 - E. Include anti-fraud measures and biometric data on all visa and immigration documents; and
 - F. Authorize additional funds to states for reimbursement of the indirect costs relating to the incarceration of undocumented immigrants.
- The BLC firmly believes that the security and prosperity of the U.S. – Mexico border region is a shared responsibility of both countries that requires effective, strategic binational cooperation.
- The BLC supports the ongoing implementation of the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America between the U.S., Canada and Mexico aimed at establishing a common security strategy and to promote economic growth, competitiveness, and quality of life. The Partnership promotes strategies that 1) secure North America from external threats, 2) prevent and respond to threats within North America, 3) and further streamline the secure movement of low-risk traffic across our shared borders.
- The BLC expresses support of initiatives aimed at promoting investment and economic opportunities of migrant sending regions in Mexico such as the U.S. – Mexico Partnership for Prosperity and Mexico’s 3 for 1 program that encourages the use of remittance to build local infrastructure and economic development in migrant sending regions.
- The BLC promotes adequate security policies along the U.S.-Mexico border and firmly believe that the construction of a wall at the border would impede the legitimate flow of commerce and people into and from Mexico, the United States’ number one trading partner.
- The BLC believes that only experienced certified immigration officials should be in charge of enforcing immigration laws at the border, and only immigration enforcement programs, methodically planned, should be implemented to prevent the violation of U.S. and Mexico laws, human rights, and ultimately, the loss of innocent life.
- BLC believes that legislation to tax immigrants' remittances not only alienates U.S. corporations but most importantly represents a discriminatory action that penalizes hardworking people.
- The BLC opposes federal legislative efforts aimed at modifying immigration laws in a manner that would change the penalty of illegal status in the U.S. from a civil penalty to a felony. The BLC also opposes efforts to criminalize families and organizations that are considered to provide assistance to them.

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- The BLC recognizes the importance of immigrants in the numerous sectors of the U.S. labor force, including agriculture, construction, and the service economy.
- The BLC promotes a binational analysis of the migration phenomena and the short-term and long-term impacts on the future of the U.S. – Mexico border region.

Adopted at the Thirteenth Border Legislative Conference on May 13, 2006 in Monterrey, Nuevo Leon, Mexico by participating legislators from California, New Mexico, Baja California, Sonora, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Nuevo Leon, and Tamaulipas. Representatives from Texas and Arizona were not present due to legislative sessions.